

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Weyerhaeuser Company

Alabama Technology Network

Weyerhaeuser Incorporates Ergonomics to Reduce Workplace Injuries

Client Profile:

Weyerhaeuser Company grows and harvests trees, builds homes, and makes forest products essential to everyday lives. The company's facility in Tuscumbia, Alabama functions within Weyerhaeuser's Hardwoods & Industrial Products division which provides the furniture, cabinet and millwork industries with a single source for a broad range of products, from appearance and structural panels to graded-for-yield® hardwood lumber. The company employs 25 people.

Situation:

It is Weyerhaeuser's core policy and highest priority to protect the health and well-being of all employees through the prevention of injury and illness at work. One of the ways to accomplish this is to reduce risk levels in the workplace through hazard identification and engineering controls. Weyerhaeuser had identified certain areas of concern and desired to have these areas evaluated from an ergonomics perspective. The company contacted the Alabama Technology Network (ATN), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

ATN's Muscle Shoals Center provided assistance in conducting ergonomic evaluations of both the shop floor and office settings utilizing an ergonomics based tool that focuses on identifying at risk workstations, job tasks, and processes. ATN identified multiple tasks and workstations that presented elevated risk levels that would likely have resulted in some type of medical intervention if not addressed. The typical cost of medical intervention, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), is \$28,000 per occurrence. ATN also identified five work operations considered to be high risk. Based on ATN's analysis, the company implemented corrective actions to reduce or minimize risk levels.

Results:

* Avoided cost of occupational injuries in the amount of \$150,000.

Testimonial:

"The ATN-Shoals team was professional, prompt and thorough in evaluating our jobs from an ergonomics perspective. They were able to quickly assess the tasks people perform and identify and prioritize ergonomic risks. This allowed us to focus on higher risk areas first and improve the safety of our workplace to protect our team."

Joe Paxton, General Manager